

Face to Faith

January, 2013

No.75



The photo shows a replica of the Founder's Hiromae (worship hall). It was built in 1915 by Reverend Fujimori Kondo who is a disciple of our Founder.

Live Connected to the Universe

By The Reverend Toshimasa Okanari
Chief Administrative Director of Konkokyo

Happy New Year! This new year marks the 130th year since our Founder, Konko Daijin, passed away in 1883.

Konko Daijin lived in Japan during the last days of the Tokugawa Shogunate to the beginning of the Meiji era. He was originally a farmer and worked hard for his family's prosperity. Yet at the same time, he experienced the death of one family member after another, a serious illness himself, and other hardships. During this time, he became aware of the fact that it is not by one's own power, but through Kami's Workings that people are allowed to live. Gradually, he came to know and feel Kami's Heart.

When the Founder was 46 years old (154 years ago), Kami eventually requested of him, "There are so many people in the world suffering from hardships. When they come to you, please mediate Kami's teachings and save them so that Kami will also be saved, and people will be fulfilled." The Founder accepted the divine request and opened up his house as a worship hall for Mediation. He devoted himself to the sacred work of Mediation to help others, until his death at age 70.

It can certainly be said that the workings of Mediation is at the very core of Konkokyo. By relaying to Kami the worshipper's requests, and in turn, conveying Kami's divine teachings to the worshippers, Konko Daijin's Mediation was truly a way to save lives and provide guidance.

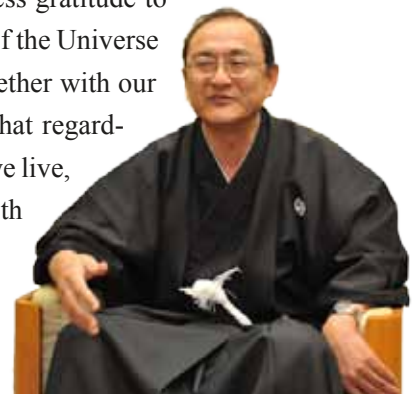
Let me tell you a story about Mrs. Shino Toshimori, a follower of the Founder. Her only son, Chiyokichi, was physically weak by nature and diagnosed with tuberculosis at age 9. At age 27, Shino heard about a "living god" and went to the Founder's Worship Hall to request her son's recovery.

Yet despite Shino's request, the Founder did not talk about her son's illness, at all. Instead, he only spoke about all people being allowed to live through the Workings of the Universe and Kami's blessings. He said, "The light that the Sun shines upon us is a divine blessing. So, too, the rain that falls. All people are allowed to live amidst divine blessings."

At first, Shino did not comprehend the Founder's words. However, while listening, she gradually became aware of the truth – that her ancestors, she, and her son had been allowed to live through the Workings of Kami and the Universe, which is beyond human strength. Then finally, she vowed, "From now on, I will change my way of life to one of expressing gratitude to Kami."

Through Konko Daijin's Mediation, Shino experienced a drastic change of heart. Soon after, she received a blessing that could be "seen," a "fact," if you will, through Chiyokichi's complete recovery from his illness.

We are given the teaching: "Heaven is father and Earth is mother." Let us not be led astray by problems that occur in life. First, let us express gratitude to the ceaseless Workings of the Universe and live day by day, together with our Parent Kami. I believe that regardless of the age in which we live, to live a life together with our Parent Kami gives us strength to live and receive blessings, and a foundation for happiness.



Wishes from

From Korea by Sayoko Amano

While I was in Japan, there was a workshop in Kubara Church where I learned about our Founder's way of life. What left a deep impression in my heart was that the Founder accepted everything Kami said to him.



There is a teaching which says Kami won't be happy with only one generation of faith. I hope to turn my heart to Kami and receive Toritsugi Mediation for everything. Also, I will pray for others and I hope to share the faith with my husband.

I recite the Faith Movement's goals every time I pray. My wish is for my faith to grow and to go to Headquarters for the 130th Anniversary of the Founder this October with a grateful heart.

From Brazil by Mitsuru Suenaga

I think Kami's big wish for me will be fulfilled this year, on the 130th Anniversary of the passing of the Founder. Kami has entrusted me with the responsibility of a Konko Church and while I am anxious and concerned about it, I am also looking forward to it.



It is very challenging to let Brazilians know about the Founder's faith, but I would like to understand the heart of our Founder and a *Wagakokoro* (joyful and peaceful heart) faith.

I will not forget that Konko Daijin is satisfied as long as people can be saved, so I will try my best here in Brazil.

From Paraguay by Toshiko Maehara

Congratulations on 130th Anniversary of the Founder. Recently, I reflected upon my way of life a few years ago, since back then I was feeling low and getting upset or irritable. However, I have faith in Konko-Sama now and I am receiving blessings so I can begin to think more positively about things and respect the feelings of friends and acquaintances. I'm also praying to receive blessings for the daily life and health of my families, relatives, friends, and acquaintances.



It is the 130th Anniversary of the Founder this year, so I would like to try my best to achieve my goal of finding the best aspects in other people in order to please Kami and the Founder as much as possible. Happy New Year!

From Hawaii by Wanda Tamashiro

Hauoli Makahiki Hou (Happy New Year in Hawaiian) on *Konkosama's* 130th Anniversary! From this point on, let us think about how we become one with Kami. Apologizing for our past, appreciating the present and requesting a hopeful future, help us toward the goal of becoming one with Kami.



Apologizing frees my mind. Appreciating makes the seen and unseen blessings clearer. Requesting help, by praying together ecumenically as a family (my children are Christians), we found blessings of love and support of family and friends, found expert doctors, and realized the worth of Konkokyo's respect for all religions. I know Konkokyo works in my life and I think it will in yours too. Hauoli Makahiki Hou! Aloha.

Around the World

From UK by Helly Chahal

What I learn from Konkokyo is the importance of “reaching out.” Although Japanese in origin, Konkokyo welcomes people throughout the world and that is what makes it so rare and unique; it does not presuppose any creed or predilection while religious institutions traditionally have been associated with division and exclusion.



Being unable to conform is a common experience for people embedded in rule-governed communities and institutions, but Konkokyo is the pursuit of something else. An important part of our role as human beings is the development of social rationality and an understanding and acceptance of difference. As we enter 2013, the quest to build bridges amongst disparate elements and pursue genuine peace in areas fraught with conflict is as important as ever.

From Canada by Joshua Laite

When I thought about faith when I was younger, I saw it as a very taboo subject. I loved the idea of someone out there that could help me when absolutely needed, but the unfortunate part was that I was very scared to talk with my friends about it because of the apparent stigma. I appreciated the stories people were willing to tell though and I want to be able to share my story too.



Faith has been a big part of my life since I’ve attended the Konko Youth Camp; every summer, I met many people who belonged to the same religion as me and it gave my faith the opportunity to grow exponentially. However, this growth would slow down when I came home because I felt like I couldn’t talk about it with the rest of my friends. This summer has proven that wrong though.

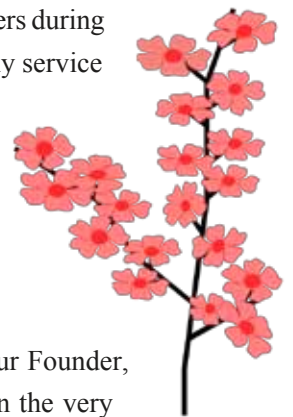
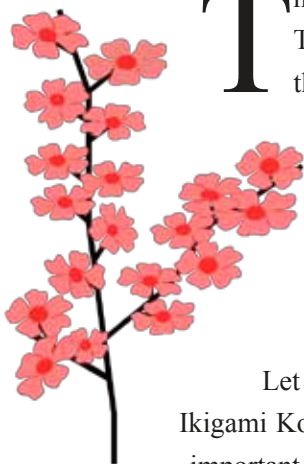
I grew up with Konkokyo, but most of my friends belonged to Christian churches and so I also gained a little knowledge of Christianity. When I told them about my beliefs in Konkokyo, there was an overwhelming acceptance from them. I feel as though they have completely opened my faith to the world and I could never be thankful enough for receiving such a divine blessing.

Announcement for the 130th Anniversary Grand Service

This year marks the 130th year since our Founder, Konko Daijin, passed away in 1883. The Grand Ceremony for the 130th Anniversary will be held at our Headquarters during the month of October, 2013. It will be celebrated with four Grand Ceremony service dates: October 3, 6, 10 and 13.

Our Founder is the first to mediate between Tenchi Kane No Kami and people. Thanks to our Founder’s Mediation, many suffering people were saved and also Tenchi Kane No Kami was saved. And now, even after his passing, as a Living Spirit, our Founder continues to mediate our wishes to Kami and Kami’s wish to us.

Let us understand this sacred work of Mediation! To show appreciation to our Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin, let us all make the effort to attend and participate together in the very important and commemorative 130th Anniversary Grand Service.



A Report From a Workshop on the Doctrine

The Konkokyo International Center held a workshop with seven participants on the doctrine under the theme of “*Meguri* ~to realize a salvation over the modern world~” on October 30, 2012. “*Meguri*” refers to an ancestor’s or someone’s deed done in the past that causes difficulties. According to English-translated *Konkokyo Kyoten, Sacred Scriptures of Konkokyo*, “*Meguri*” is translated as “accumulated offenses”.

At the workshop, it was confirmed how the meaning of “*Meguri*”, includ-



ing the “*Meguri*” the Founder recognized, has been explained in Konkokyo. The participants compared “*Meguri*” with Eastern Ideas such as Karma (an inevitable retribution) or a transmigration of the soul. It was also discussed how we can understand global difficulties in the world from perspective of “*Meguri*”.

A person today would most likely not accept the thought that “*Meguri*,” an act that the person may not be aware of at all, is an irreverence to Kami and one that shall bring about difficulties to him. He is apt to take a negative attitude toward this thought. But a faithful clarification of “*Meguri*” was confirmed at the workshop. By assuming “*Meguri*” as his own personal matter, the person can have a strong



will that he shall certainly be given a divine blessing, and he can acknowledge the fact that he is living in continuity of life inherited from ancestors and passed to descendants. Thus, the way to receive a divine blessing will open. The concept was presented as a future issue regarding how to express this idea in a way that could be accepted by anyone. It is important that “*Meguri*,” one of key concepts in Konkokyo, be explained to many suffering people.

Konkokyo Faith Gathering in Australia

The Konkokyo International Center (KIC) held a Konkokyo Faith Gathering in Sydney, Australia on December 1 and 2, 2012 to outreach the local society. This was the seventh gathering in Australia since these began in 1999.

On November 30, the film, *Divine Favor Depends upon Your Own Heart*, was presented at Sydney University. Before the showing, Reverend Masafumi Kimoto, staff member of KIC, gave a presentation about Konkokyo.

After the presentations, a participant who is studying about Jesus Christ remarked, “It is very lucky for Konkokyo followers to have their Founder’s cordially written scripture. For me who is researching about Jesus, it is almost impossible to research his own achievements and to discover something new.” Another participant expressed her further interest in reading the Konkokyo scriptures and watching

animated story Konko-Sama.

On December 1, a faith enrichment workshop was held for the Japanese believers. Reverend Nobuhiro Kusuki, staff member of KIC, talked about some Founder’s experiences. Then, the participants shared their own faith experiences.



Film showing

On December 2, a service was conducted in both Japanese and English. During the service, each participant offered a flower and personal prayer to Kami. After the service, sacred rice given by the Spiritual Leader were distributed to the participants. Then, Reverend Kimoto gave a sermon. After the gathering, attendees talked about their plan to hold gatherings by themselves with events such as a BBQ party, to make



build the bonding relationships of local followers, and to keep in touch each other thereafter.

